1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

793 787 *The Selection of the Panda.* One old *panda* described to us how his son had been selected to be his successor and had even begun to assume some of the duties before the father had to give them up. When the old man wanted to know who would be his successor, he went with his son to the village shrine, and they prostrated themselves on the plastered courtyard before the *devi*. It was at *Jawara* time, when the *devis* are most active, and he told the *devi* (Khermai in this case) that he had a request to make of her; would she hear? He waited until he felt, by strange movings of his hair that she was present and listening, and then asked if she would have his son for her *panda*. He says that he became unconscious, and while in that state Khermai spoke through him to the people present to say that she was willing to have his son as her priest. When he came out of his trance he found that his son was also possessed of Khermai and that he was shaking and shivering and uttering the strange cries which are characteristic of one so enchanted. This was, he says, the confirmation of the *devi's* willingness to have him, and she had even then possessed him. From now on the son could not be considered as merely an assistant, for he was a *panda* who would soon take over all the work of the shrine. We did not see the son, who at the moment was working in the Cement factory at Kymore, digging up stone. But since that first time, the son had often been possessed of the *devis*, and on each occasion he had named the *devi* commanding him at that moment. He makes regular offerings to the *devis*.

If the *panda* has no sons, the selection is from a group of likely young men, or the community may simply join up with another village. A few weeks after the *panda's* death, the village elders gather in the evening at the shrine and begin to play the drum and [781] sing songs of the *bhagat* type. As the evening wears on and the insistent throbbing of the drums becomes more strident, an emotional excitement spreads over some of them. It may centre on one of the players, or on another who is singing, or yet on another seated there. This is a manifestation of the presence of the *devi*, and those who feel 793 the *bawa* coming upon them should go before the village shrine. It may be that one of those present is particularly affected; he may 787 shout, scream, beat himself upon the ground, lash himself with a barbed 785 iron lash to be found at the shrine, or he may put on the spiked sandals and jump about. Whoever thus shows that he is supremely possessed is marked out as the successor of the deceased *panda*.

If, however, the interested onlookers cannot agree that it is genuine, and if there should be more than one candidate in that state, there will have to be even more extreme tests. One of these is to thrust